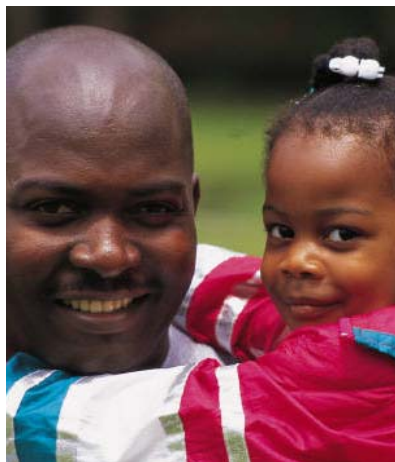


**Tomorrow's Vacancies,
Today's Priority:
Michigan Family Independence Agency's
Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool
How-To Guide**



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Submitted by:



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Background

Public human services agencies across the country struggle to provide quality service with a workforce plagued by high turnover, low wages, huge workloads and a paucity of professional development opportunities. A major factor in the human services profession's losing battle to recruit, retain, motivate and reward its workforce is the often outmoded and ineffective human resources management (HRM) function found in many public agencies.

Within the past few years, there has been a growing awareness of the critical role HRM must play if the problems facing the human services workforce are to be addressed. In some jurisdictions, the HRM function has taken on a strategic role, and a number of innovative programs have been implemented in an attempt to make the HRM function more flexible, responsive and supportive.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), Human Services Workforce Initiative is the first national effort to address the critical condition of the nation's human services workforce. To establish a baseline of knowledge concerning HRM in public human services agencies and the quality of the human services workforce, the Foundation funded a study of HRM best practices from 2000 through 2002. This study addressed two primary objectives:

- Identify jurisdictions leading the way in implementing HRM reforms within particular technical areas, such as recruitment, salary administration and career management.
- Determine how widespread the reported advances in public sector HRM were.

In March 2002, the Annie E. Casey Foundation commissioned CPS Human Resource Services (CPS) to study HRM best practices within public human services agencies. The study's objective was to identify jurisdictions in which HRM best practices have been effectively applied in agencies serving families, children, and neighborhoods. The project goals were to:

- Determine the "transferability" of the identified HRM best practices.
- Identify the likely barriers to successfully implementing the best practices across a wide array of jurisdictions.

CPS identified two human resources innovations we believed to be worthy of further study. One of these is the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA) Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool (CCHP). The CCHP was designed to drastically reduce the length of time required to fill child welfare staff vacancies.

The Family Independence Agency is Michigan's public assistance, children's services and family welfare agency. FIA directly administers programs through a network of over 100

county human services agencies in every county in Michigan. Although the FIA administers the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grant, the Food Assistance program and a myriad of other financial assistance and social services programs, our review is focused on the impact of the CCHP in the children's services area, particularly in the Children's Protective Services and the Foster Care programs.

At the time of our study, the FIA had about 10,500 employees. About a third of the employees were in Wayne County (the Detroit area). There were approximately 130 office locations, ranging in size from under twenty employees to several hundred in the Central Office in Lansing. The HRM function was highly centralized within the Central Office, although some supportive HRM activities occurred in a number of the larger county offices.

The distinctive aspect of the CCHP concept is the process of hiring employees well in advance of future vacancies. As part of the CCHP design, FIA also changed its recruitment strategy, centralized its hiring process, and introduced new interviewing techniques.

Under the CCHP model, the FIA projects hiring needs two to four months out and uses a centralized process to hire employees to fill the expected vacancies. The CCHP process relies on continuous online recruiting and interviewing. A group of experienced child welfare supervisors comes to a central location to interview all candidates, rather than each supervisor interviewing only those candidates applying for jobs in their county office. Rather than being hired for a specific vacancy in a given location, new employees are hired based on where the Office of Human Resources (OHR) predicted vacancies would occur in several weeks.

Job candidates are encouraged to make themselves available for several different work locations. New employees are hired and sent to training so that when a vacancy does arise, a trained employee is either available or soon-to-be available. Although newly hired employees usually do not know initially where they will be assigned after completing training, they do know they will be assigned to a location in which they have agreed to work. Under the CCHP model, vacancies are usually filled with trained employees within two weeks.

The convergence of three major factors provided the circumstances making it possible for the FIA to implement its innovative CCHP process:

1. Years of frustration with the slowness of the hiring process reached crisis proportions when the FIA implemented a policy requiring that all new employees attend eight weeks of "new-worker" training before carrying a caseload. After this change, positions that had previously taken weeks to fill remained vacant for an additional eight weeks.
2. Over time, Michigan gradually relaxed civil service rules, permitting the FIA considerable autonomy in the recruitment and selection process.
3. FIA recognized the HR function as an essential strategic player, creating an environment where an innovative, but controversial, hiring process could be tried. As a member of the FIA's top executive team, the HR Director had the opportunity to

participate in setting the agency's strategic direction. FIA's strategic plan for becoming a national leader in human services delivery explicitly included a number of HR initiatives, including the CCHP process.

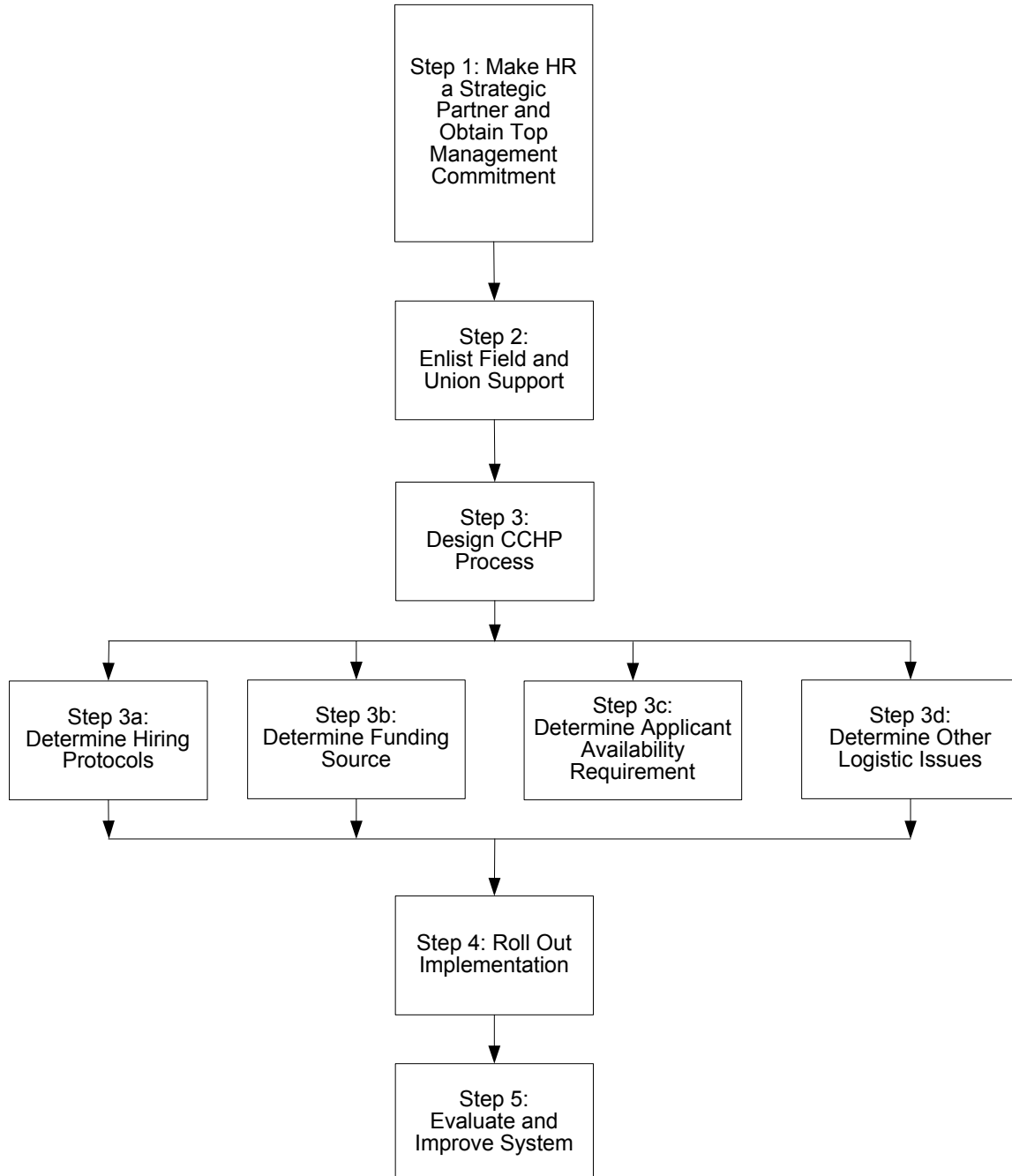
Although the "advance hiring" aspect of the FIA's initiative is perhaps the most unique element of the CCHP, it includes other features that we also consider best practices in and of themselves. As part of the CCHP design, the FIA also made the following changes:

- The Internet is now used as the primary recruitment tool. Civil service rule changes that eliminated requirements for written testing allows the FIA to recruit applicants in real time rather than rely on often outdated candidate lists.
- Competency-based behavioral interviews have replaced the previous traditional interview format. FIA first validated the competencies for Children's Protective Services and Foster Care jobs that are associated with, and predictive of, superior job performance. They then adopted a behavioral interview approach that requires applicants to provide detailed examples of their experience in the specific competency areas.
- As part of the interview process, all applicants are required to compose a short letter at a computer work station. This exercise was developed to address a common complaint from field managers about the poor writing skills of many recent college graduates. In addition to establishing basic computer literacy, the primary purpose of the exercise is to obtain a sample of the applicant's writing skills.
- The previous "hit-or-miss" approach to background checks was replaced with a thorough procedure. After the written exercise and behavioral interview, telephone reference checks are conducted on all candidates being considered. FIA also completes a thorough review of criminal histories, driver's license records, and the state's child abuse and neglect system. Conditional offers of employment are made subject to the applicant's ability to pass the drug and alcohol screening process.

Advance hiring could be implemented in any large human services agency without changing any other components of the related recruitment and selection process. For purposes of this guide, however, we review all aspects of Michigan's CCHP process.

Figure 1 (page 4) shows the CCHP implementation steps. Each step is discussed in general terms, followed by questions and answers with specific details of each implementation step.

Figure 1: Michigan Family Independence Agency CCHP Implementation Steps



CCHP Implementation Steps

Step 1: Make Human Resources a Strategic Partner and Obtain Top Management Commitment

Centralizing the hiring process will almost certainly be met with resistance. Ensuring the support of the organization's top management team is an important first step for successful implementation of a centralized hiring process. Without it, success will be compromised.

Question 1: How did FIA's Office of Human Resources (OHR) secure top management's support for the CCHP process?

Answer 1: The OHR staff first prepared information that summarized the steps in the hiring process and the length of time for each, and gave a formal presentation to a Reengineering Committee. The presentation concluded with a proposal for what would become CCHP, and the Reengineering Committee endorsed it and forwarded it to the FIA's Executive Management Team (EMT). Under FIA's organizational structure at the time, the HR Director was a member of the EMT, and he had the opportunity to strongly advocate directly to his peers a significant paradigm shift. The Team's approval of the centralized CCHP process was driven by the critical need to reduce the vacancy rate and the Reengineering Committee's strong support of the CCHP concept.

Step 2: Enlist Field and Union Support

When the central administration of an organization attempts to impose a major change on its field organization, there is often resistance. Typically, involving the field organization in the development and implementation of the change can minimize the resistance. In a unionized setting, involving the union in the early stages of the planning process is also critical.

Question 1: What steps were taken to minimize field resistance to the implementation of the Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool Process?

Answer 1: As a first step, the OHR director presented the basic concept of the CCHP process at the quarterly meeting of all FIA county directors and central office bureau and office directors. At that meeting the OHR director assured the county directors that OHR would make a concerted effort to listen to the field's concerns and hear their ideas.

As a second step, OHR staff met with county directors and supervisory groups in a number of different forums, formally and informally. They listened to concerns and answered questions.

Third, OHR welcomed suggestions, ideas, and input from the field. Ultimately, a number of key county directors became advocates for the process, taking the position that they would rather have their child welfare vacancies filled quickly by a central team than have vacancies remain open 16 weeks or longer while doing it themselves

Question 2: Were any of the ideas and suggestions from the field incorporated into the CCHP process design?

Answer 2: Yes. OHR and field managers decided that supervisors from county offices would serve on the interview panels, ask the questions, evaluate the candidates, and ultimately make the hiring decisions. OHR would simply orchestrate the process by handling the recruiting, screening, interview scheduling, reference checking, and other security checks.

Another idea was to provide an opportunity for the supervisors and the new employees to meet before the new employees were assigned to counties. Meetings were scheduled during the fifth or sixth week of training, and supervisors from counties with vacancies were invited to come and meet the trainees. After the meeting, supervisors and employees were given an opportunity to express their preferences before staffing assignments were made.

In retrospect, including this step in the process appears to have made little difference in determining who was assigned where, but providing an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting reduced the anxiety among supervisors and trainees. After several months this step was dropped because those involved began to feel more comfortable with the CCHP process.

Finally, OHR made a commitment to formally evaluate the CCHP process after approximately one year to determine whether it should be continued.

Question 3: Are FIA employees represented by a union, and if so, was union support sought?

Answer 3: Yes and yes. Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers at FIA are exclusively represented by United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 6000. Michigan Department of Civil Service (MDCS) regulates the collective bargaining process for state employees. Under MDCS regulations, the process for hiring new employees is a prohibited subject of bargaining. However, the subject of employee transfers is a mandatory subject of bargaining.

Under the collective bargaining agreement, employees desiring a transfer to a vacancy have priority over new hires. Employees hired through the CCHP process cannot be placed in a vacancy until the transfer provisions of the collective bargaining agreement have been met. During the time that the FIA was designing the CCHP process, a number of discussions occurred between Local 6000 and FIA management to ensure that the CCHP process would not undermine the transfer rights of current employees.

Step 3: Design the Process

Redesigning a large public agency's recruitment and selection process is a major undertaking. Because the FIA chose to change virtually every aspect of its recruitment and selection process, the redesign was daunting.

Question 1: Why did FIA choose to make such a radical change in its recruitment and selection process?

Answer 1: FIA knew that its traditional hiring process was not working. Vacancies were taking too long to fill, especially after FIA introduced its eight-week training program required of all new children's services workers. FIA had also recently experienced the difficulty of replacing almost 15 percent of its child welfare workforce as a result of an early retirement program.

Centralizing the hiring process was critical to the advance-hiring strategy. That strategy is based on being able to predict where vacancies will occur several weeks in the future. By hiring employees centrally who are willing to work in multiple counties, the likelihood of a vacancy opening up where a newly hired, trained worker is willing to work is vastly improved.

FIA also chose to change its recruitment and selection process at the same time in an attempt to hire the best possible candidates and to capitalize on the momentum to change that was already underway. Focusing on hiring the best possible candidates was particularly important for the CCHP to win over field management support for the process.

Question 2: How long did it take to design the process?

Answer 2: It took about three months from the time the Executive Management Team approved the CCHP process to the time that job offers were made to the first CCHP candidates.

Step 3a: Determine the Hiring Protocols

When changing from a decentralized to a centralized hiring process, a number of logistical issues must be addressed. Beyond that, some organizations may decide to capitalize on the momentum of the change initiative to make improvements in other parts of the selection process.

Question 1: What aspects of the hiring process did FIA change when it implemented the CCHP?

Answer 1: The major process changes included:

- Recruiting via the Internet.
- Assessing writing skills and basic computer skills.
- Introducing a competency-based behavioral interview.
- Implementing a thorough background check procedure.

Question 2: Where are job interviews conducted?

Answer 2: Most interviews are conducted in either Lansing or Detroit.¹ Job applicants and the interviewing supervisors travel to these locations. The interviewing supervisors sometimes have difficulty traveling to participate in the selection process. On occasion, interviews have been conducted on-site in some of the larger counties when the hiring projection suggests that several vacancies will need to be filled there.

Question 3: How often are interviews conducted?

Answer 3: Interviews are normally scheduled approximately four to six weeks before a new-worker training session or Child Welfare Institute (CWI) commences. There are usually eight to ten CWI sessions scheduled for the year, with each session training 20 to 40 new employees. The calendar for the CWI is set one year in advance, based on OHR input about projected hiring needs.

Question 4: How many interviews are conducted for any one hiring event?

Answer 4: Approximately three times as many applicants are interviewed as there are projected vacancies. Normally, more “hirable” applicants are identified during the hiring process than there are projected vacancies. Those applicants continue to be considered along with other candidates identified as “hirable” during subsequent hiring events. If a “hirable” applicant has not been offered a job within one year, he/she must reapply.

Question 5: Who serves on the interview panels and evaluates the candidates?

Answer 5: A group of experienced child welfare supervisors interviews all candidates, rather than each supervisor interviewing only those candidates applying for jobs in their county office.

¹ Lansing was selected as an interview site because the FIA’s central office, including the Office of Human Resources, is located there. It is also centrally located within the state. Detroit is also used as an interview site because a large percentage of the workforce is located in the Southeast Michigan area.

Question 6: What kinds of questions are asked during the interview?

Answer 6: In November 2001, the FIA had validated the competencies associated with superior performance and implemented a behavioral-based interview format. Based on the premise that past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior, behavioral questions were designed to elicit answers about how job candidates have handled specific situations in the past. For example, an interview question for the “decision making” competency might be, “Tell me about the most difficult decision you ever had to make and how you went about making it.” For the “customer service” competency the question could be, “Can you recall a time when you provided really excellent service to one of your clients? Please tell us about it.” The key to successful behavioral interviewing is in asking probing follow-up questions that reveal the applicants’ underlying behaviors and thought processes.

Question 7: Are the supervisors who serve on interview panels given any special training?

Answer 7: Yes. The supervisors who serve on interview panels are required to attend a one-day training program on behavioral interviewing.

Question 8: Is the decision to hire based solely on the interview?

Answer 8: No. FIA considers several factors:

1. Applicants must meet the minimum education and experience requirements, as determined by MDCS.
2. Applicants must meet requirements for computer and writing skills. Before the interview, an applicant is seated at a computer workstation and asked to complete a fifteen-minute written exercise.
3. OHR staff conduct reference checks with former employers, do criminal history checks, driver’s license checks, and review FIA’s internal system, which identifies the names of those for whom probable cause of child abuse and neglect has been established.
4. OHR administers drug tests to eligible applicants.

Question 9: Have the FIA’s recruitment strategies changed as a result of the CCHP process?

Answer 9: Yes. FIA relies heavily on Internet postings as a major recruitment source. OHR’s CCHP staff attend university-sponsored job fairs and similar events. They have also established strong partnerships with the state universities’ social work schools, and are often invited to classrooms to speak about career opportunities. Targeted recruiting occurs to ensure a diverse workforce. County directors and managers are encouraged to engage in informal recruiting activities while participating in other community service activities. Caseworkers are also encouraged to participate in recruiting by talking about career opportunities in the FIA with friends, acquaintances, and colleagues from other agencies.

Step 3b: Determine the Funding Source

Many public human services organizations recognize that not all authorized positions will be filled at any one point in time, creating a budget surplus. An “advance hiring” model need not cost more money, but may change the way an agency uses its budget surplus.

Question 1: How does the FIA budget for the CCHP process?

Answer 1: The dollars to pay the salaries of the employees in the CCHP hiring pool (while in training or on temporary assignment until vacancies open up) were basically diverted from the field operations budget.

In most years, budget surpluses developed throughout the year as funded vacancies went unfilled. FIA simply made the decision to use the anticipated surpluses throughout the year to fund the pool. Beyond that, prior to the CCHP, the counties paid the salaries of their employees while they were in the new-worker training. Post-CCHP, since most of the new employees were not assigned to a county until training had been completed, the salary costs of workers-in-training was simply shifted from the field to the CCHP account.

Question 2: What is the source of the administrative salaries used to operate the CCHP?

Answer 2: Since CCHP shifted most of the responsibility for hiring from the field to OHR, initially one, and subsequently two, positions in OHR were funded from the pool budget. Staff resources within OHR were also realigned. Prior to CCHP, OHR staff spent much of their time providing support to the field in the recruitment and selections area. After CCHP, the OHR staff handled most of those responsibilities directly.

Step 3c: Match Applicant Availability with Projected Hiring Needs

Determining parameters for job-applicant availability is a critical issue in an “advance hiring” model. Since the location of vacancies is not known with certainty at the time of hire, the more locations in which a job candidate expresses a willingness to work, the more attractive that candidate becomes. On the other hand, there should be a way to include truly superior candidates who have very limited geographic availability. Determining vacancy locations is more difficult in small-county offices.

Question 1: How does the FIA handle the applicant availability issue?

Answer 1: Job applicants list all of the counties, in order of preference, in which they would be willing to work. Applicants are told that the more counties they list, the better their chances of getting an interview, but they are also told that they should not list counties in which they really have little desire to work.

Question 2: How does OHR determine how many new employees to hire for a given location?

Answer 2: Although the FIA's data tracking systems were quite limited, it was possible to run computer reports showing the number of employees leaving each county during each pay period of the previous year or two. That data could be used to provide some basic information about the number of positions expected to become vacant in the predetermined hiring regions.

OHR also works closely with the field operations manager to monitor broad changes in overall hiring plans. For example, each October brings a new budget and a new allocation of Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers. This information is available in draft form weeks before the allocation is officially released to the counties, and can be very useful to OHR for projecting hiring needs. Under the CCHP system, employees can be hired for a given county before the county even knows that it will be receiving the new positions.

Question 3: What are the consequences of inaccurate hiring projections?

Answer 3: The CCHP system is designed to always have a small surplus of new employees (known as either "fill behinds" or "extras") ready for deployment when a vacancy occurs. When a CWI session concludes, the newly trained employees are first deployed to permanent vacancies. If there are not enough vacancies in the counties where employees have agreed to work, some employees are assigned to "fill in behind" an employee who has taken a long-term medical leave of absence.

If there are not enough medical "fill behind" needs in the counties where the employees have agreed to work, the "extras" are temporarily assigned to counties to provide general assistance. As soon as permanent vacancies arise, the "extras" are pulled from their temporary assignments and given a permanent position.

In terms of funding, wages for the "fill behinds" are paid by the counties where they are assigned. The rationale is that the "fill behinds" are replacing incumbents of fully authorized funded positions who are on unpaid leaves. An "extra" that is not assigned to a funded position continues to be paid from the hiring pool and is a drain on the pool's budget. There is considerable pressure on OHR to place the "extra" employees in funded positions as quickly as possible. Having "extras" is considered desirable if they can be placed in funded positions within 30 days, but undesirable if placement takes longer.

Inaccurate projections sometimes result in counties having a vacancy for which no one has been hired. The OHR typically has a list of employees who have been interviewed and are considered "hirable" for each county. As an alternative, if the county with the vacancy believes that an untrained worker might still be able to provide non-caseload assistance, the new employee may actually begin working before the next scheduled CWI.

Step 3d: Determine other Logistical Issues

When redesigning a recruitment and selection system, many details need to be addressed; applicant tracking systems may need to be developed, and forms and form letters may need to be devised.

Question 1: How does the FIA keep track of applicants who apply for positions through the CCHP process?

Answer 1: When the CCHP process was introduced, the FIA kept a continuously open posting on the Internet, essentially announcing vacancies for all counties CCHP covered. Since the FIA normally receives more than one hundred applications each week, it became necessary for FIA to develop a system to track them. OHR developed a computerized system that tracks all applicants, including whether they met the minimum experience and education requirements, whether they were scheduled for an interview, interview outcomes, the applicants' counties of availability, etc.

One of the primary uses of the tracking system is to monitor applicants who have been interviewed and are considered "hirable." When no projected vacancy exists for a hirable candidate, they are tracked for one year in case a vacancy occurs in a county where they indicated they would be willing to work.

Question 2: What kinds of forms, form letters, and other materials had to be developed as part of the CCHP implementation?

Answer 2: Attachments 1-4 include several documents that the FIA uses in the application process, including the letter informing applicants about the CCHP process, the form seeking their geographic availability, the pre-employment application, and a "job fit" questionnaire.

Question 3: At what point in the process are employees notified of where they will be assigned?

Answer 3: Employees are told as soon as OHR becomes certain of where their placements will be. Some employees know early in the process and others not until near the end of training.

OHR has also learned that keeping an open line of communication with the new employees while they are in training is extremely important. The HR specialist for the CCHP is normally in weekly communication with those trainees who have not been placed. That communication sometimes results, through negotiation between the HR specialist and the new employee, in the employee agreeing to go to a vacancy in a county not previously considered.

Step 4: Implementation

Many weeks or months of careful planning can be wasted in the absence of a well thought out implementation strategy. Critical implementation decisions include the scope and timing of implementation as well as developing a good communications strategy.

Question 1: Did the FIA pilot the CCHP process or move directly into full-scale implementation?

Answer 1: FIA decided to fully implement the CCHP system at the same time in all of its hiring regions. Although Michigan considered the full-scale implementation successful, it placed a tremendous burden on the HR staff working directly on the CCHP process.

Question 2: Did the FIA have a specific communications strategy to help make the transition to the CCHP process easier?

Answer 2: Yes. During the planning stages, HR staff met with the county directors during their regular monthly or bimonthly Zone meetings to solicit their input into the CCHP design. The CCHP process was also a regular agenda item for the monthly labor-management meeting with the UAW. At the point of implementation, a joint letter was sent from the HR Director and Field Operations Director explaining and endorsing the process.

Step 5: Evaluate and Improve System

Question 1: Has the FIA made any attempt to evaluate the impact of the CCHP process?

Answer 1: After the CCHP had been operational for approximately one year, OHR conducted a satisfaction survey with supervisors and managers, and also with employees hired through the CCHP process. The supervisor/manager survey showed that most were satisfied with the CCHP process, believing that jobs were being filled faster and that the quality of new hires was better. More than 75 percent of the respondents favored continuing the CCHP process.

Employee survey respondents reported being generally satisfied with the CCHP process. Their greatest criticism was with the requirement that they make themselves available for entire hiring regions. FIA changed the process for indicating one's geographic availability as a result of this input.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Implementation

In retrospect, the FIA would have piloted the process in only one or two of the regions, and expanded the process once the bugs had been worked out of the system.

The “advance hiring” model, as proven by Michigan’s Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool, holds tremendous promise for improving the timeliness and quality of service delivery to disadvantaged children and families in any large human service organization. Elements of their innovative selection and recruitment practices are transportable to an organization of virtually any size.

What makes Michigan’s hiring process so unique and so successful is its proven effectiveness in providing already-trained, high-quality workers in a fraction of the time it takes in most jurisdictions. The timely filling of vacancies is critically important in the field of child welfare, where excessive workloads, high turnover, and worker burnout are the norm. In many organizations, worker turnover and the resulting increases in caseloads for the remaining staff is the greatest contributor to caseworker burnout – which in turn leads to further turnover. FIA has demonstrated that this vicious cycle can be broken without compromising employee quality, diversity, and hiring costs. In fact, they have demonstrated improvements in each of these areas.

How big must an organization be to benefit from an “advance hiring” model?

Since the success of the model is related to the predictability of turnover, the system’s applicability is related to overall size, geography, and turnover rate. A county agency with 150 employees and a turnover rate of 30 percent will need to replace 45 employees each year. Hiring and training one or two employees each pay period would keep pace with turnover. If the agency requires that all new employees be trained before carrying a caseload, and the training is offered every other month or even quarterly, the agency may wish to hire larger groups of employees four or six times a year. If hiring to fill six training classes each year, the agency would hire 14 to 16 employees into the first cohort, so that upon completion of training, half would be assigned to fill current vacancies and the other half assigned to vacancies as they occur over the next two months. The second cohort of 7 or 8 employees would be in training while the “extras” from the first cohort are replacing employees on leaves of absence or serving as extra resources until vacancies open up.

A statewide agency of 150 employees in a large, but sparsely populated state, with a turnover rate of 20 percent, would only need to hire 30 employees each year. If that state has a large metropolitan area where most of the turnover occurs, the advance hiring process might work in that area. If the 150 employees are evenly spread throughout the state, the advance hiring techniques probably would not be feasible because the location of the turnover would be

unpredictable. On the other hand, if the employment culture of that state is one where job candidates will relocate anywhere for the job they want, the process might be successful.

Where does the money come from to pay for the extra positions?

If managed carefully, an advance hiring model should not require additional funding. The advance hiring model is designed to spend all or nearly all of the budgeted staffing dollars on employee salaries, rather than on overtime, high turnover costs, or perhaps lapsing some of those dollars.

It may appear that paying the salaries of the new employees while in training is an additional cost. In fact, however, their salaries are also paid when hired under the traditional model. The only difference is that the salary is paid after they are in a specific position under the traditional model, and paid by the agency before they are placed in a specific position under the advance hiring model. Under either scenario, the agency is paying the salaries of employees while in training.

Are there elements of the CCHP process besides advance hiring that could be incorporated into our recruitment and selection system?

There are a number of elements in the CCHP process that we believe are best practice initiatives in and of themselves. These initiatives include the validation of competencies for Child Protective Services and Foster Care workers, the use of behavioral interviewing, the online recruiting and application process, and a thorough reference and background screening process.

We have also worked with the FIA to improve and enhance other aspects of their human resources management program that are specifically related to recruitment, selection, and turnover. FIA recently produced a video intended to provide job applicants with a realistic and balanced perspective on Child Protective Services and Foster Care careers with the FIA. We believe that turnover (particularly turnover within the first several months of employment) can be reduced through the use of the video.

Based on your experience with the FIA, what specific recommendations might you make regarding the advance hiring process?

- The importance of gaining the field organization's support for the process is critical. By definition, in an advance hiring system, jobs are filled before positions become vacant, and that normally precludes the supervisor with the vacancy from being directly involved in the selection process. (It is possible that a supervisor who participated in the interview process will have a vacancy several weeks later and have interviewed and recommended the selection of someone who will ultimately be placed in his or her position.) Managers who are accustomed to selecting their own staff are usually very reluctant to relinquish the process. Although the shift can be forced by

top management edict, the process will be far more successful if managers have a voice in determining the process. Involvement and communication are key.

- Be realistic about and respectful of the new employees' needs and desires. Although expectations about relocation and last minute assignments may differ from one place to another, our experience suggests that employees want a voice in where they will work. Employees should also be able to expect as much notice of their assignment location as possible.
- We believe a well designed behavioral interview will make a significant difference in the quality of employees hired. Although many supervisors tend to want to hire the person who seems to be a good "personality match," virtually all of the research shows that traditional interviewing is a poor predictor of performance. A number of studies have demonstrated the strong correlation between behavioral interviewing and on-the-job performance.
- In very large and geographically-dispersed systems such as Michigan's, it is necessary to develop vacancy and turnover tracking systems to aid in the forecasting of vacancies. Although most employees are willing to work in any one of several locations, it is still difficult to hire people willing to work in the locations where jobs will become available several weeks later.

Attachment 1 – Applicant Letter



STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

Dear Applicant:

Our agency is filling positions throughout Michigan. Initially, these positions will be filled on a limited-term basis. All selected candidates will be sent to approximately 8 weeks of formal training. Candidates are required to attend all training sessions. Upon successful completion of the training, the candidates will be placed into a Limited Term Position. It is intended that after successful completion of the training, these positions will have a permanent placement in a county office. See the attached availability statement for additional information. A selected candidate could be assigned to any county he or she selected.

The function of a Services Specialist is to provide services to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and families. Responsibilities may involve one or more of the following programs administered by the FIA: protective services, adoption, prevention, foster care, juvenile justice, and foster home licensing.

This is not an offer of employment, but an inquiry to determine your availability. If you are interested in applying for these positions complete the enclosed Job Fit Factor Questionnaire and the FIA-1502 Pre-Employment Application which must be supplemented with a current resume and the enclosed availability statement. Please submit these, along with a copy of all your **original college transcripts (NO PHOTOCOPIES, and must have registrars signature, the date your degree was granted along with title of the major)** to: Family Independence Agency, Personnel Services, Suite 708, P.O. Box 30037, Lansing, MI 48909, Attn: Central Services Pool. Applicants will be screened based on education and experience. In order to accurately determine your qualifications, your resume should specifically address positions held, the duties of each position, the number of years in each position (begin and end dates by month and year), and the number of hours worked per week.

Civil Service Rule 2-7 requires that all newly hired state employees submit to and pass a pre-employment drug test prior to their actual appointment. This information is being provided so that you are aware that should you be selected for the position you will need to submit to and pass a drug test prior to the final offering of employment.

If a person given a conditional offer of employment fails or refuses to submit to the pre-employment drug test, interferes with a test procedure, or tampers with a test sample, the conditional offer of employment shall be rescinded. The person shall not be appointed to a position in the classified service. The person shall also be removed from all employment lists and shall be disqualified from appointment to the classified service for a period of three years.

Training will be conducted in either Lansing or Dearborn and will last from 8-10 weeks. Training is scheduled Monday through Friday. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Where travel and overnight accommodations are required, travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the State of Michigan travel regulations.

The Michigan Family Independence Agency is an equal opportunity employer. You may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs at (517) 373-8521 if a TDD is necessary.

If you have any questions, please call Ms. Leanne Parker at (517) 241-8907 and state that you would like additional information regarding the Services Specialist pool positions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael P. Downer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Michael P. Downer, Director
Personnel Services

Attachments

PLEASE NOTE: Be advised that we do not guarantee interviews for all applicants applying through this process. Applicants will be screened based on education and experience. Applications from applicants that are not chosen for an initial interview will be kept for 1 year. If you have not been contacted within 1 year of submitting your application, you may submit a new application package to show your continued interest. Interviews will be taking place on an ongoing basis throughout the year, please feel free to submit your information at any time. Due to the large volume of applications we are receiving, we request that you do not contact our office to determine if your information was received. Confirmation of receipt will be forwarded to you once the completed application is reviewed in this office.

SERVICES SPECIALIST FACT SHEET

Family Independence Agency

October, 2004

Responsibilities of a Services Specialist

These positions function as professional social caseworkers, completing a variety of assignments to provide services to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in programs administered by the Family Independence Agency, such as protective services, prevention, foster care, adoption, juvenile justice, foster home licensing, and adult services.

Rate of Pay

Salary upon appointment is based on the guidelines and rules established through the State of Michigan Compensation Plan. The minimum and maximum pay rates are as follows:

Services Specialist 9B	\$16.54 - \$20.05/hr
Services Specialist 10B	\$16.42 - \$21.06/hr
Services Specialist P11B	\$17.40 - \$22.24/hr
Services Specialist 9M	\$17.10 - \$20.65/hr
Services Specialist 10M	\$17.40 - \$22.24/hr
Services Specialist P11M	\$18.49 - \$23.88/hr

Employee will progress through the series based on satisfactory performance and possession of the required experience.

Vacancies Available

May occur in various counties throughout the State. Specific vacancies cannot be determined at this time.

Education and Experience

Education: Possession of a bachelor/ master's degree in one of the following human services areas: social welfare, social work, sociology, psychology, family ecology, consumer/community services, family and child development, guidance and counseling, criminal justice, gerontology, special education, education of the emotionally disturbed, or education of the gifted.

Experience:

Services Specialist 9 - No specific amount or type.

Services Specialist 10 - One year of professional experience providing casework services to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals equivalent to a Services Specialist in state service.

Services Specialist P-11 - Two years of professional experience providing casework services to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals equivalent to a Services Specialist in state service, including one year equivalent to a Services Specialist 10.

Attachment 2 – Availability Survey

Services Specialist Availability Statement

At this time, we are focusing on filling Limited Term, Services Specialist positions. Please select and **prioritize** (1,2,3...ETC.) **all** the counties in which you would be willing to accept employment.

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcona (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Alger (02) <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan (03)** <input type="checkbox"/> Alpena (04) <input type="checkbox"/> Antrim (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Arenac (06)** <input type="checkbox"/> Baraga (07) <input type="checkbox"/> Barry (08)** <input type="checkbox"/> Bay (09)** <input type="checkbox"/> Benzie (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Berrien (11)** <input type="checkbox"/> Branch (12)** <input type="checkbox"/> Calhoun (13)** <input type="checkbox"/> Cass (14)** <input type="checkbox"/> Charlevoix (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Cheboygan (16) <input type="checkbox"/> Chippewa (17) <input type="checkbox"/> Clare (18)** <input type="checkbox"/> Clinton (19)** <input type="checkbox"/> Crawford (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Delta (21)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dickinson (22) <input type="checkbox"/> Eaton (23)** <input type="checkbox"/> Emmet (24) <input type="checkbox"/> Genesee (25)** <input type="checkbox"/> Gladwin (26) <input type="checkbox"/> Gogebic (27) <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Traverse (28) <input type="checkbox"/> Gratiot (29)** <input type="checkbox"/> Hillsdale (30)** <input type="checkbox"/> Houghton (31) <input type="checkbox"/> Huron (32) <input type="checkbox"/> Ingham (33)** <input type="checkbox"/> Ionia (34)** <input type="checkbox"/> Iosco (35) <input type="checkbox"/> Iron (36) <input type="checkbox"/> Isabella (37)** <input type="checkbox"/> Jackson (38)** <input type="checkbox"/> Kalamazoo (39)** <input type="checkbox"/> Kalkaska (40) <input type="checkbox"/> Kent (41)** <input type="checkbox"/> Keweenaw (42)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake (43) <input type="checkbox"/> Lapeer (44) <input type="checkbox"/> Leelanau (45) <input type="checkbox"/> Lenawee (46)** <input type="checkbox"/> Livingston (47)** <input type="checkbox"/> Luce (48) <input type="checkbox"/> Mackinac (49) <input type="checkbox"/> Macomb (50)** <input type="checkbox"/> Manistee (51) <input type="checkbox"/> Marquette (52) <input type="checkbox"/> Mason (53)** <input type="checkbox"/> Mecosta (54) <input type="checkbox"/> Menominee (55) <input type="checkbox"/> Midland (56) <input type="checkbox"/> Misaukee (57) <input type="checkbox"/> Monroe (58)** <input type="checkbox"/> Montcalm (59)** <input type="checkbox"/> Montmorency (60) <input type="checkbox"/> Muskegon (61)** <input type="checkbox"/> Newaygo (62) <input type="checkbox"/> Oakland (63)**	<input type="checkbox"/> Oceana (64)** <input type="checkbox"/> Ogemaw (65) <input type="checkbox"/> Ontonagon (66) <input type="checkbox"/> Osceola (67) <input type="checkbox"/> Oscoda (68) <input type="checkbox"/> Otsego (69) <input type="checkbox"/> Ottawa (70)** <input type="checkbox"/> Presque Isle (71) <input type="checkbox"/> Roscommon (72) <input type="checkbox"/> Saginaw (73)** <input type="checkbox"/> Sanilac (74) <input type="checkbox"/> Schoolcraft (75) <input type="checkbox"/> Shiawassee (76) <input type="checkbox"/> St. Clair (77)** <input type="checkbox"/> St. Joseph (78)** <input type="checkbox"/> Tuscola (79) <input type="checkbox"/> Van Buren (80)** <input type="checkbox"/> Washtenaw (81)** <input type="checkbox"/> Wayne (82)** <input type="checkbox"/> Wexford (83)
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NOTE: Counties in **Bold Italics** with ** show counties that participate in the Hiring Pool.

If you choose a county that does not participate in the Hiring Pool, you will need to apply directly with the county's FIA office.

Name: _____

Are you a current FIA employee: _____

Address: _____

Employee Number: _____

City-State-Zip Code: _____

Please list any language you speak, read, or write,

County (residence): _____

other than English: _____

Telephone Number (Daytime): _____

E-Mail Address (Optional): _____

Social Security Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attachment 3 – Pre-Employment Application

PRE-EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION
Michigan Family Independence Agency

- PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT - Use additional pages as necessary.
- Any incorrect, incomplete or false statement of information furnished by me may subject me to discharge. This information will be verified as stated on the reverse side of this form.
- Personnel Liaison: If an applicant is hired, this form must be submitted to Personnel with the completed personnel forms packet.

Date of Application (Month/Day/Year)		Image Code 1 D	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	
Previous Last Name(s)	Previous First Name(s)	Previous Middle Name(s)	
Employee ID Number (Required For All State Employees)		Social Security Number	

Type of Job(s) Desired of Civil Service Class and Level (if known)		In Which Counties or Areas of the State Will You Accept Employment	
Date(s) Available for Employment		What Salary Level are You Willing to Consider for Employment \$ per hour or \$ per week	
Type of Employment You Would Accept (Check one or more) <input type="checkbox"/> PERMANENT (Career) <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPORARY (Non-Career)		<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME <input type="checkbox"/> SEASONAL NIGHTS	
Do You Have a Valid Driver's License <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		Driver's License Number <input type="checkbox"/> Check If You Possess a Commercial Drivers License <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
(If yes, state issued by)		Do You Have The Use of a Motor Vehicle (If required in the performance of your job duties) <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	

PERSONAL INFORMATION:			
Mailing Address (Street and Number, City, State, Zip Code)			
Permanent Address (If different)(Street and Number, City, State, Zip Code)			
Have You Ever Been Convicted of a Misdemeanor or Felony <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Date of Offense	Offense	Location
Do You Have a Felony Charge Pending <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Date of Offense	Offense	Location
Have You Been Disciplined Within the Last 2 Years (Reprimands need not be reported) <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	If Yes, Please Explain		
Have You Been Dismissed <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	If Yes, Please Explain		

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION: It is the applicant's responsibility to provide official documentation that Civil Service requirements have been met.				
NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION	TOTAL CREDITS	MAJOR FIELD	NO. OF YEARS	DEGREE(S) OR CERTIFICATE(S) RECEIVED TYPE
High School				
College				
College				
Other Training				
GED High School Equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	If Yes, Give Year	Trade/Professional Certificate or License	Number	Expiration Date
Have You Ever Worked for the State of Michigan <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	If Yes, State Department(s) and Date(s) if not included on the back of this form.			

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (Please list all previous employment, starting with your present or most recent job first. Attach resume or additional pages as needed.)

Starting Date	Ending Date	Name and Address of Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME Reason for leaving	Hours Per Week
Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor		
Job Classification and Level				
Your Duties				
Starting Date	Ending Date	Name and Address of Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME Reason for leaving	Hours Per Week
Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor		
Job Classification and Level				
Your Duties				
Starting Date	Ending Date	Name and Address of Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME Reason for leaving	Hours Per Week
Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor		
Job Classification and Level				
Your Duties				
List Any Additional Comments Regarding Your Experience or Skills				
In applying for employment, it is understood that the Family Independence Agency reserves the privilege of contacting past employers regarding references. May we also contact your present employer at this time?		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If Yes, Name of Person to Contact and Phone Number (include area code).	
I hereby authorize my former employers to provide any legally releasable information regarding my employment with them to the Family Independence Agency. I further authorize the Department of State to provide my motor vehicle operator license record to the Family Independence Agency. I understand that the Family Independence Agency will conduct a Child Protective Services Central Registry screening on all applicants for positions having direct contact with children, to determine if there are any substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect. In addition if any applicant feels they have been discriminated against in applying for employment with this Agency they may file a written complaint with any or all of the following: Michigan Family Independence Agency, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or U.S. Health and Human Services.		If a person given a conditional offer of employment fails or refuses to submit to the preemployment drug test, interferes with a test procedure, or tampers with a test sample, the conditional offer of employment shall be rescinded and the person shall not be appointed to a position in the classified service. The person shall also be removed from all applicant pools and shall be disqualified from appointment to the classified service for a period of three years.		
Applicant's Signature		I hereby represent that the data provided by me in this application is complete and true to the best of my knowledge, and may be verified by the Family Independence Agency. I understand that any incorrect, incomplete or false statement of information furnished by me may be cause for rejection of this application or subject me to discharge.)		Date

The authority for publication of this form is Public Act 280 of 1939. Completion of this form is voluntary. The penalty for non-completion of this form is: The Family Independence Agency may be unable to document or verify an applicant's credentials, and since the Department of Civil Service holds each appointing authority responsible for the validity of these credentials an applicant's chances for employment may be hindered.

The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs, disability, or genetic information. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.

Attachment 4 – Job Fit Questionnaire

JOB FIT MEASURES

SERVICES SPECIALIST

There are many different aspects to any job and it is important for an applicant to determine if the position they are applying for will be a good fit with their abilities and interests. The Services Specialist position will be either Foster Care or Children's Protective Services.

Foster Care workers are involved with the placement of children in Foster Care families and with their on going care. The Children's Protective Services position is one of investigation and referral to agency services and the judicial system.

The Job Fit Measures is designed to help you understand the work of the Services Specialist positions. It is a difficult job with many challenges and many rewards. However, many applicants do not understand what they will be asked to do if hired. The following list of Job Fit Measures indicates the tasks a successful candidate will have to perform. Please read these carefully and provide your assessment of how often you believe you will have to engage in the identified task. The information on the amount of time that you believe you will be engaged in the task will be used for research purposes. The task themselves are presented to educate you on the responsibilities of the job, followed by a self-assessment of how well your skills and interests will fit with the job requirements.

Please take the time to complete this form as honestly as possible so you can make an effective assessment of your potential for success in one of the positions.

Expectations Measure

How often will you engage in the following activities as a Service Specialist?

1	2	3	4
Not very often	Seldom	Occasionally	Very often

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Conducts risk assessment; i.e. evaluate conditions and risks to child in the home on basis of child abuse and/or neglect complaints. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Develop a case plan; i.e. determine appropriate methods and plans of action based upon investigation findings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Obtain a court order to remove child from an extreme condition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Testify in court and defend actions under vigorous cross-examination. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Interact with court personnel outside the courtroom; i.e. file petitions, phone call, and meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Manage large caseloads of at risk children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Interact with angry, aggressive, hostile, and emotional individuals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

8. Spend time interacting with children.	1	2	3	4
9. Using a computer to enter information, accessing records, and completing paperwork or forms.	1	2	3	4
10. Spend time on the phone coordinating with other service agencies.	1	2	3	4
11. Counseling family members.	1	2	3	4
12. Assess physically injured children.	1	2	3	4
13. Work with other service providers; e.g. therapists, schools, doctors, and hospital staff.	1	2	3	4
14. Participate in meetings with coworkers.	1	2	3	4
15. Transport families to and from needed appointments at service agencies.	1	2	3	4
16. Negotiate and mediate with law officials regarding what is in the best interest of the family.	1	2	3	4
17. Work unpredictable hours including weekends and on-call shifts.	1	2	3	4
18. Prioritize and compose written reports under deadlines while dealing with pending cases and organizational matters.	1	2	3	4
19. Diffuse escalated situations when dealing with angered clients.	1	2	3	4
20. Work with a diverse group of people.	1	2	3	4

FOSTER CARE

21. Recruit new foster parents.	1	2	3	4
22. Train new foster parents.	1	2	3	4
23. Evaluate parenting skills of birth parents or foster parents.	1	2	3	4
24. Develop a plan for the child; i.e. decide if parental rights should be terminated or if family can achieve reunification.	1	2	3	4
25. Counseling family members.	1	2	3	4
26. Follow up visits with foster family and child to assess progress.	1	2	3	4
27. Manage large caseloads of at-risk children.	1	2	3	4

28. Provide help to abusive or neglectful parents in order to reunite families.	1	2	3	4
29. Testify in court and defend actions under vigorous cross-examination.	1	2	3	4
30. Using a computer to enter information, accessing records, and completing paperwork or forms.	1	2	3	4
31. Spend time on the phone coordinating with other service agencies.	1	2	3	4
32. Assess physically injured children.	1	2	3	4
33. Work with other service providers; e.g. therapists, schools, doctors, and hospital staff.	1	2	3	4
34. Participate in meetings with coworkers.	1	2	3	4
35. Transport families to and from needed appointments at service agencies.	1	2	3	4
36. Process payments for foster parents using a computer.	1	2	3	4
37. Negotiate and mediate with law officials regarding what is in the best interest of the family.	1	2	3	4
38. Prioritize and compose written reports under deadlines while dealing with pending cases and organizational matters.	1	2	3	4
39. Work unpredictable hours including weekends and on-call shifts.	1	2	3	4
40. Diffuse escalated situations when dealing with angered clients.	1	2	3	4
41. Work with a diverse group of people.	1	2	3	4

Self-Assessment of Job Fit

Rate each behavior on how characteristic it is of you.

	1 Very uncharacteristic of me	2 Mostly uncharacteristic of me	3 Mostly characteristic of me	4 Very characteristic of me
1. High adaptability			1	2 3 4
2. Strong decision-making skills			1	2 3 4
3. Highly organized.			1	2 3 4
4. Consistently apply policies and procedures.			1	2 3 4
5. Pay attention to detail.			1	2 3 4
6. Remain calm in highly stressful and/or emotional situations.			1	2 3 4
7. Take advantage of learning opportunities.			1	2 3 4
8. Proactive.			1	2 3 4
9. Multi-task efficiently.			1	2 3 4
10. Strong communicator.			1	2 3 4
11. Handle emotional situations.			1	2 3 4
12. Able to work with individuals of different cultural backgrounds.			1	2 3 4
13. Able to meet deadlines.			1	2 3 4
14. Effective networkers.			1	2 3 4
15. Good listener.			1	2 3 4
16. Good problem solver.			1	2 3 4
17. Assertive.			1	2 3 4
18. Independent worker.			1	2 3 4
19. Provide quality customer service.			1	2 3 4

Thank you! Please be sure to include this document in your application package.